

Causatives, decausatives and unaccusatives

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Abstract

Different approaches to causativity are compared. The direction of semantic derivation in pairs consisting of a reflexive verb and its non-reflexive (causative) counterpart is discussed, as well as the distinction between causativization and decausativization. Non trivial parallels are established between Russian decausatives and the so called unaccusative verbs.

Keywords

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1 Causatives and decausatives

In the article Iordanskaja, Melcuk 2002 two types of semantic relationships were delineated – **causation** (i.e. the relation between a verb and its causative) and **conversion** (the relation between a verb and its conversive). These relationships may connect

- different verbs;
- different uses or meanings of verbs (lexemes);
- different forms of a verb (or a verb and its morphological derivative).

For the case when these relationships connect different verbs the definitions of causativity and conversion look like follows.

The relationship of V_1 to V_2 is called **causative** (i.e. V_1 is a causative of V_2), if V_1 has the meaning ‘to cause the situation denoted by V_2 ’. For example, *рассмеишь* ‘make laugh’ is a causative of *рассмеяться* ‘to laugh’.

The relationship of V_1 to V_2 is called **conversive** (i.e. V_1 is a conversive of V_2), if V_1 and V_2 denote one and the same situation but the participants of the situation are expressed in the case of V_2 by different syntactic arguments than in the case of V_1 (and, therefore, have different communicative ranks). In example (1) *проснуться* is a conversive of *разбудить*:

- (1) a. Меня *разбудил* шум в коридоре ‘A noise in the corridor woke me up’;
b. Я *проснулся* от шума в коридоре ‘I woke up because of the noise in the corridor’.

In this paper I develop the topic outlined in Iordanskaja, Melcuk 2002 – starting from considerations about Russian medial verbs put forward in Падучева 2001. I shall concentrate on the case, when one of the two verbs is the reflexive (medial) of some basic (direct, non-medial) verb. In the Russian grammar some reflexive verbs are taken to be grammatical forms of direct verbs (for example, *строится* is the passive of *строить*). I shall treat a

reflexive as always being a **medial form** (a medial) of its basic verb. (Thus, I only deal with reflexive verbs for which the basic verb exists, not taking such verbs as *бояться* into consideration.)

In this case it is commonly said that V_2 is related to V_1 not by conversion but by a **diathetic shift**, or by a change of **diathesis**. For example, in (2), where sentences (2a) and (2b) refer to one and the same situation, the form *истоциуть* and its medial voice *истоциуться* differ by diathesis:

- (2) a. Постоянные войны *истоцили* казну ‘Perpetual wars *exhausted* the treasury’;
b. Казна *истоцилась* от постоянных войн ‘The treasury *became exhausted* of perpetual wars’.

Direct diathesis, example (2a), assigns the Causer the highest rank placing it in the Center of the perspective; medial diathesis moves it to the Periphery of the perspective¹.

In Iordanskaja, Melcuk 2002 three types of relationships between a reflexive verb and its corresponding direct counterpart are considered.

Type I, **causation**; for example, *истоциуть* (as in (2a)) is a causative of *истоциуться* (as in (2b)).

Type II, **pseudocausation**; for example, *поднять* (as in *Иван поднял Машу с земли*) is a **pseudocausative of** *подняться* (as in *Маша поднялась с земли*).

Type III, **conversion**; for example, *восхищать* (as in *Асю восхищает ее новое платье*) is a conversive of *восхищаться* (*Ася восхищается своим новым платьем*).

The treatment of the verb *истоциуть* as a derivative of *истоциуться* deserves comments. The idea that a reflexive verb, such as *разрушиться*, being morphologically more complex than the initial *разрушить*, can be semantically basic, was developed by Igor Melchuk in his article of 1967 (see Мельчук 1967) and the phenomenon was called **backward word formation**. Perhaps, this solution was connected with realization of the huge role played by the predicate CAUSE in the semantics of lexicon. This role was discovered with admiration by the newly born lexical semantics, and it was natural to use it in grammar as well.

The idea of backward word formation is attractive and certainly has the right of existence. Still, another approach also has the right of existence, which takes the morphologically simpler form as the basic one and treats the medial verb or verb form as resulting from derivation: in the course of time treatments other than causativization have become possible – due to subsequent scientific research that widened the inventory of semantic, syntactic and morphological instruments at the disposal of linguists. Now we have a powerful apparatus allowing description of varying relationships between the participants of the situation, semantic arguments, and their surface correlates, syntactic arguments (actants). The notion of diathesis became current; the notion of **argument derivation** got into use: argument derivation **increasing** the number of arguments, **decreasing** <this number>, **interpretative**, and others, were delineated, see Плу́нган 2000.

In general, the direction of derivation is not wholly predicted by morphology. As a matter of fact, for English, where causal relations are not expressed morphologically at all, two different possible directions of derivation are recognized in the corresponding context. Of the two examples of transitive – intransitive alternation from Levin, Rappaport 1995 the first is treated in this book as **causative alternation** (i.e. change of diathesis), while the other one (pseudocasativization according to I.Melchuk) is, obviously, causativization:

- (3) John *opened* the door – The door *opened*;
(4) The general *marched* the soldiers – The soldiers *marched*.

¹ **Diathesis** of a verb or a lexeme (Мельчук, Холодович 1970) is here understood as a set of participants of the denoted situation (participants are identified by their semantic roles, such as Agent, Patient, Instrument, etc.) and their communicative ranks expressed syntactically: the Subject and the object provide the participant with the highest rank – Center; indirect cases and prepositions yield the rank Periphery; participants that have no syntactic position in the verb’s argument structure have the lowest rank – Offstage (see Падучева 2004: 51ff).

The direct and the backward shifts aren't the exact reverse of one another semantically. In fact, a transition from a causative verb to a non-causative may not coincide semantically with the initial non-causative verb. Examples from Мельникова 2002:

- (5) a. *высохнуть* 'to become dry' → *высушить* 'to dry';
 b. *высушить* → *высушиться*; [*высушиться* ≠ *высохнуть*]
 (6) a. *остыть* 'to get cold' → *остудить* 'to cool';
 b. *остудить* → *остудиться*; [*остудиться* ≠ *остыть*]

Thus, not denying the plausibility of backward word formation analysis of example (2) along the lines of Мельчук 1967, I propose an alternative version of the relationship between the causative verb and its reflexive counterpart in this example. The question is, which of the two approaches provides a deeper insight into the verb system as a whole. The fact that causativization is not productive in modern Russian (as it is in English or was in Old Russian) is an important (though not a decisive) argument.

The relationship between a reflexive and its basic verb in such examples as (2) I shall treat as **decausativization**; so, a causative verb in (2a), will be treated as basic, while the medial in (2b) as derived. See other examples. Sentences (7b), (8b) are decausatives, correspondingly, of (7a), (8a):

- (7) a. John *broke* the window 'Джон *разбил* окно';
 b. The window *broke* 'Окно *разбилось*';
 (8) a. John *opened* the door 'Джон *открыл* дверь';
 b. The door *opened* 'Дверь *открылась*'.

There are three separate meaning shifts accounting for the semantic relationships between decausatives and their causative counterparts in examples (2), (7), (8):

1) **deagentivization**, a categorial shift:

Джон *открыл* дверь 'John *opened* the door' →
Порыв ветра *открыл* дверь 'A gust of wind *opened* the door';

2) **decausativization** proper, a diathetic shift changing the communicative rank of the participant Causer:

Порыв ветра *открыл* дверь 'A gust of wind *opened* the door' →
Дверь *открылась* от порыва ветра 'The door *opened* with a gust of wind';

3) **Unspecified Adjunct deletion** – interpreting valence-decreasing derivation according to Плуноян 2000:

Дверь *открылась* от порыва ветра → Дверь *открылась*.

Each of the three shifts has an independent motivation and a wide sphere of application outside decausativization. Presenting deagentivization as a separate meaning extension rule has the following advantages.

a. Lexical limits on decausativization can be rigorously formulated; namely, those verbs engender derived decausatives that allow non-agentive use (for example, *открыть* 'open' can be deagentivized, while *отрезать* 'cut off' cannot). In this way lexical boundaries of decausativization of a causative verb are reduced to those of its deagentivization and need not be stated separately.

b. Deagentivization, i.e. a lexical rule changing the taxonomic class of the subject, is presented as forming a part of the rule that builds the meaning of the decausative from an agentive causative verb. In this way non-agentivity of decausatives is explicated: it is accounted for by the fact that decausatives are formed from non-agentive causative verbs or non-agentive uses of such verbs.

Take as an example the verb *колебаться* (in its primary "physical" meaning 'shake'); non-agentive use for *колебать* is practically the only one possible – agentive uses are only met in poetry:

- (9) Доволен? Так пускай толпа его бранит,
И плюет на алтарь, где твой огонь горит,
И в детской резвости *колеблет* твой треножник. (Пушкин. Поэту)

If so then *колебаться* belongs to the class of decausatives.

c. Treating deagentivization as a separate shift gives us the possibility to present the relationship between a non-agentive causative verb and its decausative as a purely diathetic shift; in fact, both non-agentive causative verb and its decausative denote happenings, so they differ only in communicative ranks of the participants.

On the other hand, a verb with a non-agentive subject is presented as a separate lexeme, i.e. as a word with a different lexical meaning. In fact, in many respects causative verbs behave differently when used with agentive and non-agentive subjects:

- instrumental action, such as *грубым пинком* ‘with a rude kick’ in example *Он разбудил меня грубым пинком*, is only possible in the context of a verb with an agentive subject;
- on-going process interpretation for the Imperfective is also a prerogative of an agentive verb;
- many adverbs, such as *нечаянно* ‘inadvertently’, *нарочно* ‘on purpose’, *предусмотрительно* ‘prudently’ combine only with agentive verbs.

And the list of arguments in favor of decausativization, with deagentivization that “precedes” it is not exhaustive. Thus, deagentivization can be said to change the word’s lexical meaning, if only because non-agentive subject of a verb is responsible for many features of its syntactic behavior. There is no other place to pin this information but to a separate lexeme in the lexicon. Generalizations, if possible, belong to the grammar of lexicon which does not yet exist.

Problems of polysemy (both of medial verbs and of their causative counterparts) occupy an important place in Iordanskaja, Melcuk 2002. And rightly so. As we saw above, polysemy of a causative verb, namely, the possibility of a non-agentive reading, plays a crucial role in its interpretation as a decausative, for a decausative can only have a non-volitional Causer.

Let us now compare medials of type I and type II investigated in Iordanskaja, Melcuk 2002. (Type III, mostly emotion verbs, won’t be an object of our attention in this paper, see a thorough analysis of this class, e.g., in Апресян 1998.)

What follows from the fact that in my approach relationships of **type I** are treated as decausativization, i.e. as a diathetic shift? A diathetic shift presupposes identity of the set of participants. Let’s take an example:

- (10) a. Взрыв бомбы *разрушил* дом ‘Explosion *destroyed* the house’;
b. Дом *разрушился* от взрыва бомбы ‘The house *destroyed* with a bomb explosion’.

A house can be imagined as destroyed “by itself”, in the course of time. In this case it is not necessary to state the reason of destruction. Still the verb is not incompatible with reason specifications. Note that “by itself” is not at place in the case of predicates with inner causation, like *glitter* (Levin, Rappaport 1995):

- (11) *The diamond *glitters* by itself.

Construction with the preposition *от* ‘from’ is widely used in order to specify the Cause in the context of a decausative verb (cf. Иорданская, Мельчук 1996). Examples from the Russian National Corpus (www.ruscorpora.ru) :

- (12) При этом они [постройки] сохраняют хорошую прочность и не *разрушаются от* атмосферных воздействий;
в прихожей оно [ковровое покрытие] будет постепенно *разрушаться от* песка и грязи, приносимых на обуви, зато прекрасно подойдет для гостиной.

One of the pillars of «Meaning \leftrightarrow Text» theory is the division of a verb’s arguments into actants and circonstants. The question is, how to identify the PP with *от* in examples (2b) or (12). The background Causer of decausatives is recognized in Iordanskaja, Melcuk 2002 as

an obligatory participant of the situation but a syntactically non-obligatory argument of the verb. And this seems a plausible solution. In Падучева 2001 it is argued that the background Causer of a decausative can be omitted if the Cause is unknown or irrelevant. In any case, there is an analogy between omitted object NP in (13) and omitted causal PP in (14):

(13) Он *поел* ‘He ate <something: I don’t know what or it isn’t important what>;’;

(14) Дверь *открылась* ‘The door opened <because of unknown or unspecified Cause>;’.

Type II relationship, identified in Iordanskaja, Melcuk 2002 as pseudocausativization, is exemplified by:

(15) а. Иван *поднял* Машу с пола ‘John lifted Masha from the floor’;

б. Маша *поднялась* с пола ‘Masha stood up from the floor’.

Type II is demonstrated to differ from type I in that the proposition with a causative doesn’t entail the one with the corresponding medial. In fact, (16a) entails (16b):

(16a) Взрыв бомбы *разрушил* дом ‘Explosion *destroyed* the house’ →

(16b) Дом *разрушился* от взрыва бомбы ‘The house *destroyed* with a bomb explosion’.

Meanwhile (15a) doesn’t entail (15b) – in order to stand up Masha should have made some efforts herself, and (15a) implies that she couldn’t or didn’t want to.

Note that inner causation is included in the meaning of a medial of type II even in the case of an inanimate subject, as in (17b):

(17) а. Ася *катит* мяч по дорожке ‘Asja *rolls* the ball along the road’;

б. Мяч *катится* по дорожке ‘The ball *rolls* along the road’.

There is another important difference between (15) (pseudocausativization) and (2) (decausativization): the causative counterpart in a pseudocausativization pair may have an animate subject, see (15a); which is excluded in clear cases of decausativization. Meaning representation of *катится* includes the component ‘сам себя’ (as in *Колобок катится*); thus, a word formation pattern that would produce the meaning of *катить* from that of *катиться* must provide cancellation of this semantic component.

From the traditional point of view the medial *подняться* is derived from *поднять* by means of **reflexivization**: *подняться* belongs to the same type of medial verbs as *умыться* ‘wash’, *одеться* ‘dress’, which is undoubtedly agentive.

This type of relationship between a causal verb and its medial can be discerned in a huge class of **verbs of motion** (Падучева 2001; see also Levin, Rappaport 1995: 155–158): at the first opportunity *sj*-forms acquire not a decausative but a reflexive interpretation; the subject is treated as the Causer of its own motion. Examples:

(18) забиться (в угол), направиться, переправиться, погрузиться, задержаться

(*телефонный звонок задержал меня - я задержался из-за звонка*), приблизиться, снизиться, повернуться, передвинуться, построиться, оттолкнуться, разместиться.

Almost every object, even if it is inanimate, is conceptualized as moving by itself having received a proper impulse (*пуля пролетела над головой*). So in the class of motion verbs reflexive – and, thus, potentially agentive – interpretation of medials predominates. So this is not accidental that in (15b) *поднялась* has the meaning ‘подняла саму себя’ = ‘raised herself’, and not ‘поднялась сама собой’.

The same is true about verbs of **change of position** – they are interpreted as reflexives, not as decausatives, even when used with an inanimate subject:

(19) наклониться (*дерево наклонилось к воде*), двинуться (*льдина двинулась*), взгромоздиться

(*Глыбы льда взгромоздились друг на друга*), спуститься (*Лодка спустилась вниз по реке*), остановиться (*Коряга остановилась от встречного потока*).

Verbs *приблизиться*, *снизиться*, *понизиться* can be interpreted as decausatives if they do not denote motion; *углубиться* (in *противоречия углубились* ‘controversies deepened’) is a decausative, while *углубиться в лес* is a verb of motion and a reflexive; *остановиться* is a decausative in (20b), meaning ‘cease to take place’, but not in (20a); *вернуться* in (21) is a decausative because it doesn’t express motion:

- (20) a. Лиса *остановилась* ‘The fox stopped’ [reflexive];
 b. Строительные работы *остановились* ‘The work stopped’ [decausative] .
- (21) С его приездом *вернулась* надежда [decausative] ‘With his arrival hopes for the best *came back*’.

Thus, we believe the distinction of type I and type II of Iordanskaja, Melcuk 2002 to be of crucial importance, though in both types it is possible to treat a causative verb as basic and the corresponding medial as derived. The difference is that type I is decausativization, which is a diathetic shift (the set of arguments remains untouched), while type II, reflexivization, reduces the number of arguments of the verb, being the case of argument decreasing derivation: two participants merge into one.

Causative relationships in lexicon and grammar were intensively studied in the framework of the so called **unaccusativity hypothesis**. It is worth while to explore the possibilities provided by this approach.

2 Decausatives and unaccusatives

More than two decades of linguistic research were devoted to the so called Unaccusativity Hypothesis², which seeks at drawing a distinction between two classes of intransitive verbs (or intransitive usages of verbs). A verb is said to belong to the class of **unaccusative** verbs, if its subject position is occupied by a participant that, according to its semantic role, could have been an object – be it another use of the verb or another verb with a similar meaning. Thus, the subject of an unaccusative verb is not an Agent but rather a Patient or Theme: these roles are usually marked by the Accusative – hence the term. In Barbara Partee’s dissertation (see Hall 1965) it was emphasized that many transitive verbs allow an intransitive variant, where the subject corresponds to the direct object of the transitive verb; for example *break* in *The cup broke* lacks the Accusative position for its single participant, thus the participant surfaces as Nominative.

Intransitive verbs with an agentive subject, like *walk*, *play*, *laugh*, are called **unergative**.

Two approaches to unaccusativity are to be distinguished: one is syntactic, the other is semantic. Syntactic unaccusativity presupposes special markers: the so called diagnostics – auxiliary selection, passivization possibilities, etc., – are said to reveal the markers of unaccusativity. No markers of syntactic unaccusativity can be traced in Russian, so I shall only speak about semantic (or deep) unaccusativity (as it is outlined in Levin, Rappaport 1995: 17-20). Semantic unaccusatives are intransitive verbs (or intransitive uses of transitive verbs) that have non-agentive or not completely agentive subjects. A **prototypical subject** is agentive, animate, volitional, exerting influence, i.e. causing a change of state or position; on the other hand, a **prototypical object** is non-agentive, inanimate, non-volitional; causally affected; changes its state or position in the course of action (cf. Proto-Agent and Proto-Patient in Dowty 1991).

See below examples from Pesetsky 2002. In sentences (22a), (23a), (24a) the verb has the intransitive use; and sentences (22b), (23b), (24b) show that the participant-subject of (22a), (23a), (24a) has a role characteristic of the object. Hence, verbs in (22a), (23a), (24a) are unaccusatives:

- (22) a. The submarine *sank* [Patient; subject];
 b. The navy *sank* the submarine [Patient; object].
- (23) a. The door *closed*; b. We *closed* the door.
- (24) a. The glass *dropped*; b. The waiter *dropped* the glass.

In order to show that the subject of a verb is object-like it is not necessary to find a context where THIS SAME verb is used with this same NP as an object, as in (22)-(24); it is

² See the history of the problem and all necessary bibliography on Unaccusativity Hypothesis in Levin, Rappaport 1995.

sufficient to find a verb entering a certain semantic proportion. An example by David Pesetsky:

- (25) a. The letter *came* today;
b. *The mailman *came* the letter today;
c. The mailman *brought* the letter today.

The verb *brought* in (25c) is related to *came* in (25a) in the same way as *dropped* in (24b) – to *dropped* in (24a). From this we see that the subject of *came* in (25a) is object-like.

This device discloses the way of thinking very familiar to Meaning \Leftrightarrow Text Theory. Suffice it to remember the fictitious verb **преступнать* ‘to commit a crime’ motivated by *преступление* ‘crime’ and invented in order to complete the proportion relating verbs to their nominalizations:

- (26) разрушать ‘destroy’ : разрушение ‘destruction’ = **преступнать* : преступление.

Obviously, the subject of examples (22a) – (24a) is demonstrated to be object-like when we treat (22a)-(24a) as resulting from decausativization. Now, if the notion of unaccusativity is applicable also in case of examples like (25) then we may hope that unaccusativity can make the way for extending decausativization analysis beyond morphologically medial verbs.

In many cases the relationship between an intransitive verb and its transitive relative is similar to that between a decausative and its basic verb. Thus, we can apply decausative analysis also to verbs that are morphologically non-decomposable; or have no corresponding causative with the same stem; or can be regarded as medial only on the basis of their meaning, not form. In example (27a) the intransitive verb *скопил’ся* is a true decausative of the transitive *скопил’*; while *прибыл’* in (28), with its non-prototypical subject, is a potential decausative (of a non-existent causative) – and, thus, a semantic unaccusative:

- (27) a. На сундуке *скопилась* пыль ‘Dust *accumulated* on the chest’;
b. Время *скопилось* на сундуке пыль ‘Time *accumulated* dust on the chest’.
(28) a. Книги *прибыли* сегодня утром ‘The books *arrived* this morning’;
b. Неопределенный каузатор **прибыл* книги сегодня утром ‘An indefinite causer **arrived* the books this morning’.

In Levin, Rappaport 1995 different thematic classes of unaccusatives in different languages are considered. Let’s look at some of them from the point of view of Russian.

2.1 Change of state verbs

Most of the existing Russian decausatives stem from change of state verbs – verbs of deformation (*отломиться*), change of location (*сместиться*) or spatial configuration (*согнуться*), emotional state (*возбудиться*, *успокоиться*), physical and physiological state (cf. *нагреться* и *согреться*), etc.

Investigation of change of state verbs was initiated by Fillmore’s 1970 paper on hitting and breaking. In the framework of «Lexicograph» (Кустова, Падучева 1994, Падучева 2004) this class of verbs can be described as a class that includes both achievements (happenings) and accomplishments (actions), but in case of an action the manner of action should not be specified in the word’s meaning: verbs that specify the **manner** of movement, **manner** of speaking, etc., express not just a change of state but some kind of action.

In this way we get an explanation why reflexive counterparts of *открыть* ‘open’ or *разбить* ‘break’, change of state verbs, have a decausative interpretation, while those of *принести* ‘bring’ or *порезать* ‘cut’, actions, are interpreted differently.

An example of a non-morphologically identifiable decausative verb is *гнить* ‘decay’. Semantic analysis identifies it as an unaccusative, namely, as a semantic decausative of the transitive *гниотить*. English *deteriorate* is mentioned in Levin, Rappaport 1995 as an unaccusative verb lacking causative use; so its decausativity and unaccusativity becomes

clear only on the level of semantics. Meanwhile Russian *ухудшаться* ‘deteriorate’ has a corresponding causative *ухудшить* and is, thus, a morphologically motivated unaccusative.

2.2 Verbs of motion and spatial configuration

As was said in section 1, most motion and spatial configuration verbs are reflexives, not unaccusatives. For example, *разбиться* ‘break’, a change of state verb, is unaccusative, while *наклониться*, a verb of spatial configuration, is unergative.

A puzzle is connected with the Italian ‘arrive’ and all words meaning ‘arrive’ in other languages, in particular, with the Russian *прийти*: all these verbs are listed among typical unaccusatives (for example, Italian *arrivare* takes *essere* as an auxiliary) within the syntactic approach to unaccusativity.

The existing explanation says that the subject of *прийти* is not only an Agent but also a Theme: the one who came has changed his or her location. But then all change of spatial configuration verbs (such as *сесть* or *встать*) should also be unaccusatives – which is not the case: *сесть* and *встать* are, semantically, reflexives and, correspondingly, unergatives (cf. Levin, Rappaport 1995: 126ff).

There is a hope to explain the obvious unaccusativity of *прийти* with the help of the Observer. Such verbs as *прийти* (and, naturally, also English *come*), *появиться*, *показаться* ‘arrive, appear’ presuppose an Observer Offstage; but then it is clear that the subject of these verbs is not only an Agent but also the object of observation. Which fact provides the subject with a lower place on the scale of agentivity. A similar explanation was proposed for the genitive of negation in Partee, Borschev 2004.

2.3 Verbs of existence and appearance

Verbs of existence and appearance have an obviously non-agentive subject. In Levin, Rappaport 1995: 119ff it is maintained that they do not allow causative analysis analogous to that given to examples (22) – (24) above.

I try to find such analysis. Take, e.g., the verb *найти* ‘find’ = ‘cause X begin to be in the field of vision’, which has an intransitive use (29a) (example from Levin, Rappaport 1995: 123):

(29) a. Решение *нашлось* на странице 90 ‘The solution was found on page 90’;

b. Студент *нашел* решение на странице 90 ‘The student found the solution on page 90’.

We analyze (29a) as follows. When the verb *найти* has a transitive use, as in (29b), its subject is both an Agent (who carries out the looking for) and an Experiencer. When the verb is used intransitively the Experiencer goes Off stage, thus becoming an Observer, and the Percept occupies the subject position. (In Падучева 2004: 248 the analysis along the same lines is proposed for the verb *обнаружиться*.) In short, Russian *найтись* shows itself as an unaccusative verb, which fact can be demonstrated with the help of the standard procedure of decausativization.

Such verbs as *скрыться* ‘hide’, *потеряться* ‘get lost’, *обнажиться* ‘get uncovered’, treated as decausatives in Падучева 2001, are, thus, unaccusatives.

Among verbs motivating decausatives we never see the verb *видеть* ‘see’. And this is a matter of principle. Perception can be conceptualized as causing some change in the state of the percept. With the verb *видет* this is not the case. The only participant whose state is changed is the Experiencer him/herself. Thus, *видеть* cannot motivate a decausative.

As for true verbs of existence and appearance, they are related semantically: appearance = coming into existence, cf. Kimball 1973: 267: “The concept of existence <...> formed semantically as the perfective of coming into being”. They have non-prototypical subjects, but, as is convincingly argued in Levin, Rappaport 1995, they are neither decausatives nor unaccusatives.

Thus, my conclusion is that in many cases intransitive verbs with a non-agentive (or not fully agentive) subject can be regarded either as morphologically marked or as inherent (semantic) decausatives of non-existent but plausible transitive verbs with a non-agentive Causer. The difference between unaccusative and unergative intransitives can be disclosed by the following test: unaccusative verbs, such as *упал*, ‘fell down’, resemble decausative *разрушился* and by default presuppose *sam soboi* ‘by itself’ (not *sam sebja* ‘him/herself’); while unergatives, such as *встал*, resemble reflexive *катится* and presupposes *sam sebja* ‘him/herself’ (not *sam soboi* ‘by itself’).

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